



Work/Family Conflict Issues for Soldiers and Families

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Background

- WRAIR
 - The Walter Reed Army Institute of Research is the oldest and largest of the laboratories in the U.S. Army Medical and Materiel Command.
- WRAIR Mission
 - To conduct biomedical research that is responsive to DoD and U.S. Army requirements and delivers life saving products including knowledge, technology, and medical material that sustain the combat effectiveness of the warfighter.



Background

- Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences Mission
 - To provide knowledge and interventions to reduce the impact of mental disorders, improve psychological functioning, and enhance the readiness of soldiers, leaders, and families.



Work-Family Conflict Research

WHO?

WHAT?

WHERE?

WHEN?

WHY?

HOW?



WHO? (Active Army)

	#	%
Single	578,222	42.2
Single, with children	87,475	6.4
Married to civilian, no children	144,008	10.5
Married to civilian, with children	481,944	35.2
Dual Military, no children	43,581	3.2
Dual military, with children	33,913	2.5
Total DoD	1,369,143	



WHO? (Reserve and Guard)

	#	%
Single	364,938	41.7
Single,with children	54,816	6.3
Married to civilian, no children	188,446	21.5
Married to civilian , with children	226,671	25.9
Dual military, no children	21,213	2.4
Dual military, with children	19,314	2.2
Total DoD	1,833,051	



WHAT? Family Research Model

Predictor Variables

- Geographic Mobility
- Residence in a Foreign Country
- Fear of Soldier Injury/Death
- Deployments and Separations

Intervening Variables

- Demographics
- Employment Status
- Social Support
- Soldier Commitment to Family
- **Work/Family and Family/Work Conflict**

Outcomes

- Physical Health
- Psychological Well-Being
- Satisfaction with Army
- Spouses' Retention Preference
- Marital Satisfaction



WHAT? WFC Defined

- “a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect.”
(Greenhaus and Beutell (1985))
 - Work-Family Conflict- WFC: when work-role activities impede performance of family responsibilities (i.e., long hours in paid work prevent the performance of duties at home).
 - Family-Work Conflict- FWC: when family-role responsibilities hinder performance at work (i.e., a child’s illness prevents attendance at work).



WHY study WFC & FWC?

- Relevant Studies
 - Kossek & Ozeki (1999) examined 32 studies and found WFC to be negatively related to both job satisfaction and life satisfaction.
 - Allen et al. (2000) in summarizing the results of 67 studies, found WFC was negatively related to job satisfaction, organizational commitment and turnover intentions and family outcomes such as marital and family satisfaction.
 - FWC is related to absenteeism, tardiness and turnover (Crouter, 1984; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).



WFC & FWC in Military

- In the military :
 - Is WFC/FWC a significant problem?
 - Is WFC/FWC negatively related to physical health, psychological health, job satisfaction, attitudes toward the Army, retention?
 - What is the relationship between OPTEMPO and WFC/FWC?
 - What variables exacerbate or diminish the relationship between WFC and outcome variables? (Gender? Information flow? Work predictability? Unit climate?)



WHERE? WHEN?

- Studies
 - “Unit Leadership, Downsizing, and Community Supports: Impacts on Soldier-Family Stress Contagion”
 - 1998-1999 AD, USAR, ARNG- Army’s III Corps (N=2,486 soldiers, 1,384 spouses)
 - “ A Human Dimensions Assessment of the Impact of OPTEMPO On the Forward Deployed Soldier”
 - 1999-2001 10 companies in Europe, C, CS, CSS (N=686)
 - “The Impact of Operations Tempo (OPTEMPO) on the Military Family”
 - 2001-2002 spouses of soldiers in 10 companies in Europe (N=506)



WHERE? WHEN?

- Studies (cont.)
 - “The Impact of Operations Tempo (OPTEMPO) on Senior Leaders’ Spouses”
 - 2002 spouses of Colonels and Generals in Europe (N=32)
 - “Enhancing the Well-Being and Readiness of Soldiers and Families Defending the Homeland”
 - 2001-ongoing AD,USAR, ARNG -Pentagon, Fort Stewart, Guantanamo, Iraq (N= 447)
 - “Impact of PERSTEMPO and Deployment Experiences on the Mental Health and Functioning of Soldiers and Their Families”
 - 2002-ongoing 82nd Airborne Corps, USASOC (N=3,500)



HOW?

- Method
 - Surveys
 - Interviews
- Survey instrument includes scales developed by Netemeyer, Boles, and McMurrian (1996)
 - Work-Family Conflict Scale
 - Family-Work Conflict Scale



HOW? Surveys

- Work-Family Conflict Scale
 - The demands of my work interfere with my home and family life.
 - The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfill family responsibilities.
 - Things I want to do at home do not get done because of the demands my job puts on me.
 - My job produces strain that makes it difficult to fulfill family duties.
 - Due to work-related duties, I have to make changes to my plans for family activities.



HOW? Surveys

- Family-Work Conflict Scale
 - The demands of my family interfere with work-related activities.
 - I have to put off doing things at work because of demands on my time at home.
 - Things I want to do at work don't get done because of the demands of my family.
 - My home life interferes with my responsibilities at work such as getting to work on time, accomplishing daily tasks, and working overtime.
 - Family-related strain interferes with my ability to perform job-related duties.



HOW? Interviews

- Interview schedules are developed specifically for each study in order to elucidate the quantitative survey data.
- Examples from the ARNG Homeland Defense Interview Schedule:
 - What did you do after deactivation to make the transition back into your family and workplace?
 - How did your family do during the time you were activated?
 - How would you, your family, your employer feel if you were activated again?



Question 1:

- Is FWC/WFC a significant problem?



Family Work Conflict

Both Senior and Junior spouses indicated low levels of family/work conflict. Senior spouses reported significantly less conflict than Junior spouses ($t = -3.84$, $df = 106$, $p < .000$)

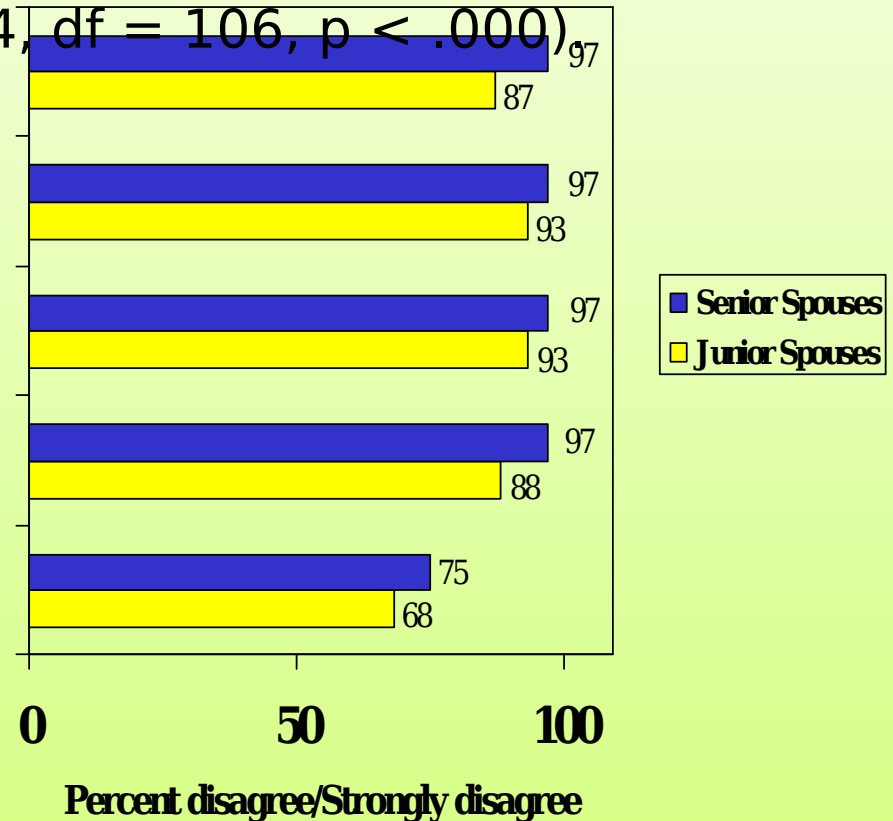
Family-related strain interferes with my spouse's ability to perform job-related duties

My spouse's home life interferes with his/her responsibilities such as getting to work on time

Things my spouse wants to do at work do not get done because of the demands of the family

My spouse has to put off doing things at work because of demands on his/her time at home

The demands of the family interfere with my spouse's work-related activities





Family/Work Conflict

Both deployed and garrison spouses indicated low levels of family/work conflict. Deployed spouses reported significantly less conflict than garrison spouses ($t = 2.12$, $df = 353$, $p < .034$).

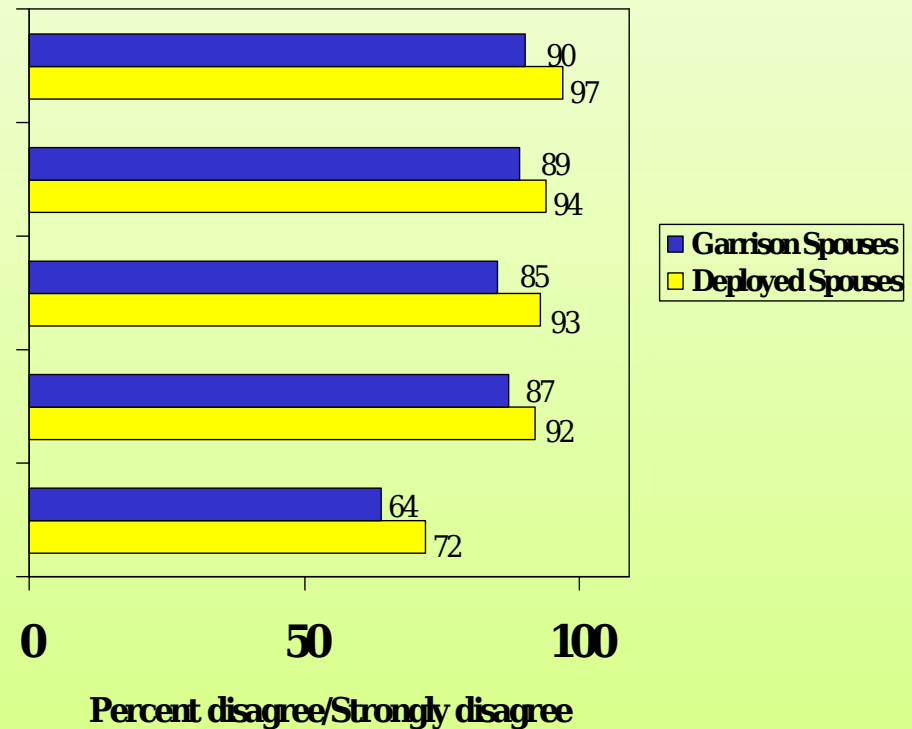
My spouse's home life interferes with his/her responsibilities such as getting to work on time

Things my spouse wants to do at work do not get done because of the demands of the family

My spouse has to put off doing things at work because of demands on his/her time at home

Family-related strain interferes with my spouse's ability to perform job-related duties

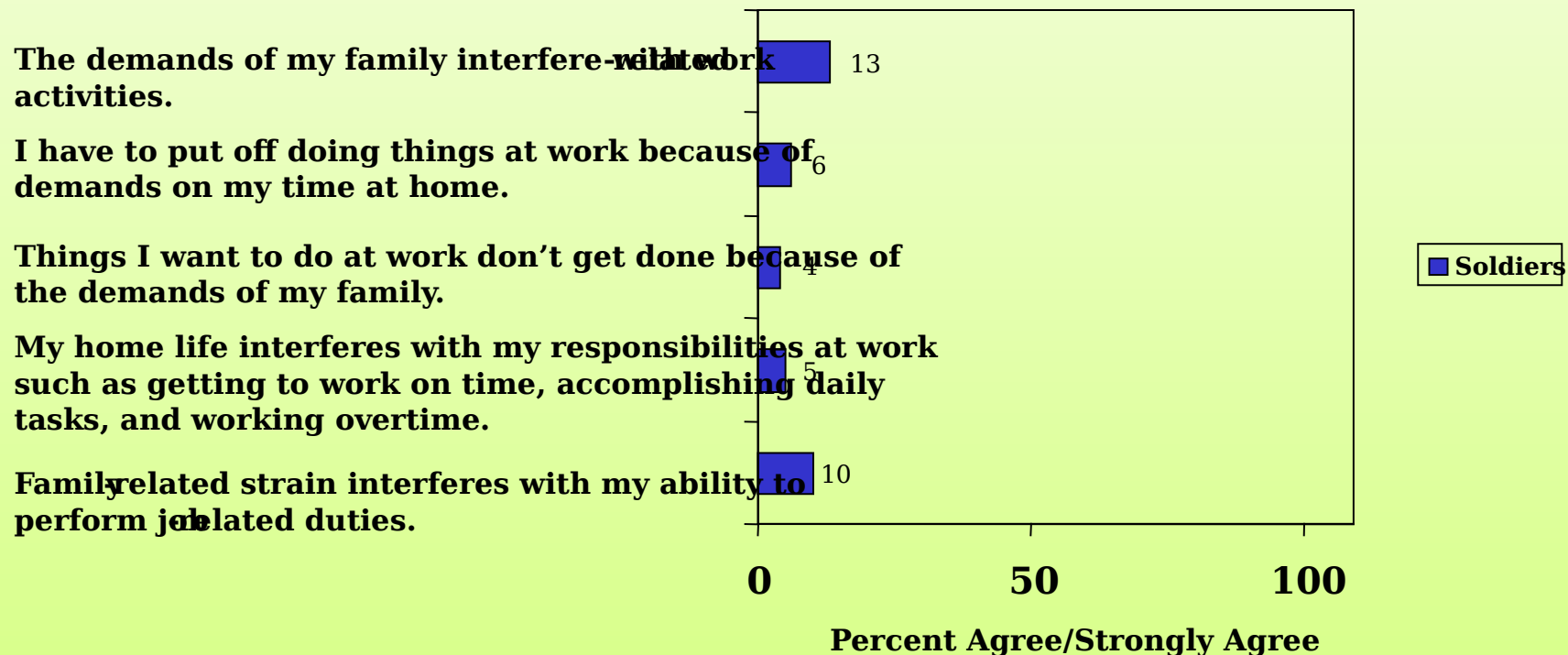
The demands of the family interfere with my spouse's work-related activities





Family/Work Conflict

Fewer than 15% of soldiers thought demands at home affected their work.





Work/Family Conflict

Both Senior and Junior spouses indicated high levels of work/family conflict. Junior spouses reported significantly more conflict than Senior spouses ($t = 2.92$, $df = 107$, $p < .004$).

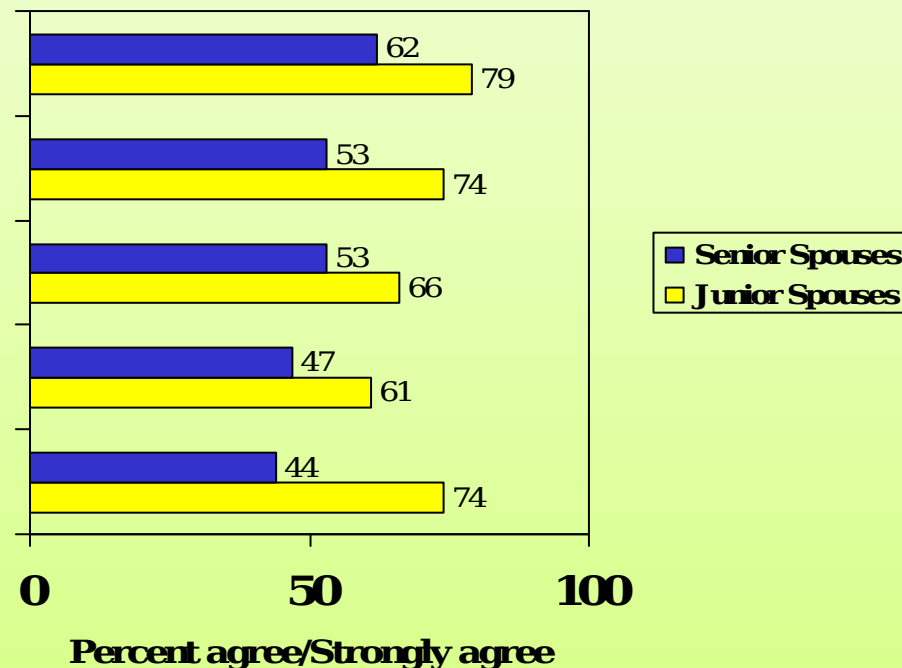
Due to my spouses' work, I have to make changes to plans for family activities

The demands of my spouses' work interferes with home and family life

The amount of time my spouses' job takes up makes it difficult to fulfill family duties

Things I want my spouse to do at home don't get done due to job demands

My spouses' job produces strain that makes it difficult for him/her to fulfill family duties





Work/Family Conflict

Both deployed and garrison spouses indicated high levels of work/family conflict. There were no significant differences between deployed and garrison spouses with regard to the levels of conflict reported ($t = .770$, $df = 353$, $p < .442$).

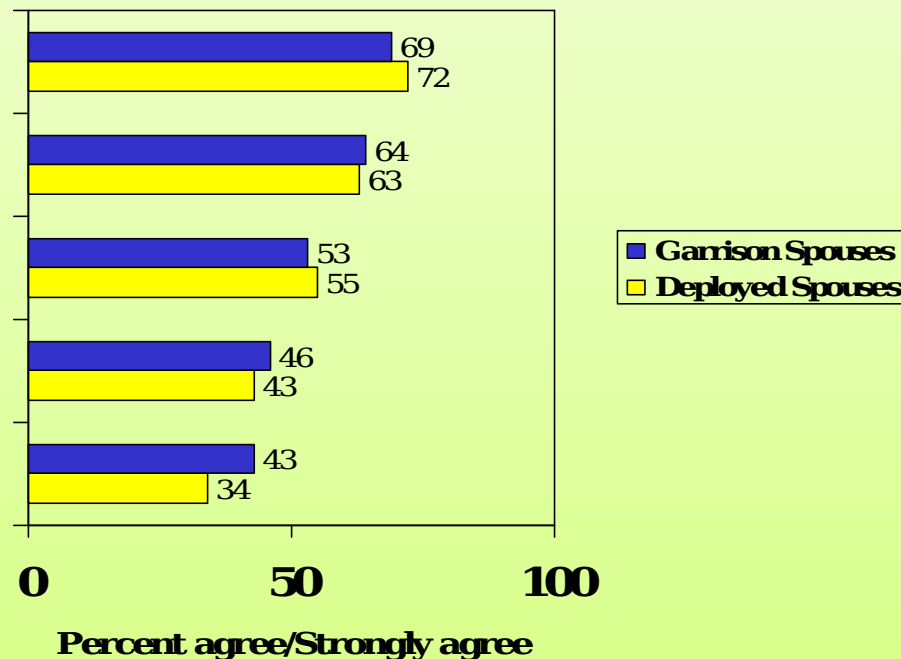
Due to my spouses' work, I have to make changes to plans for family activities

The demands of my spouses' work interferes with home and family life

The amount of time my spouses' job takes up makes it difficult to fulfill family duties

Things I want my spouse to do at home don't get done due to job demands

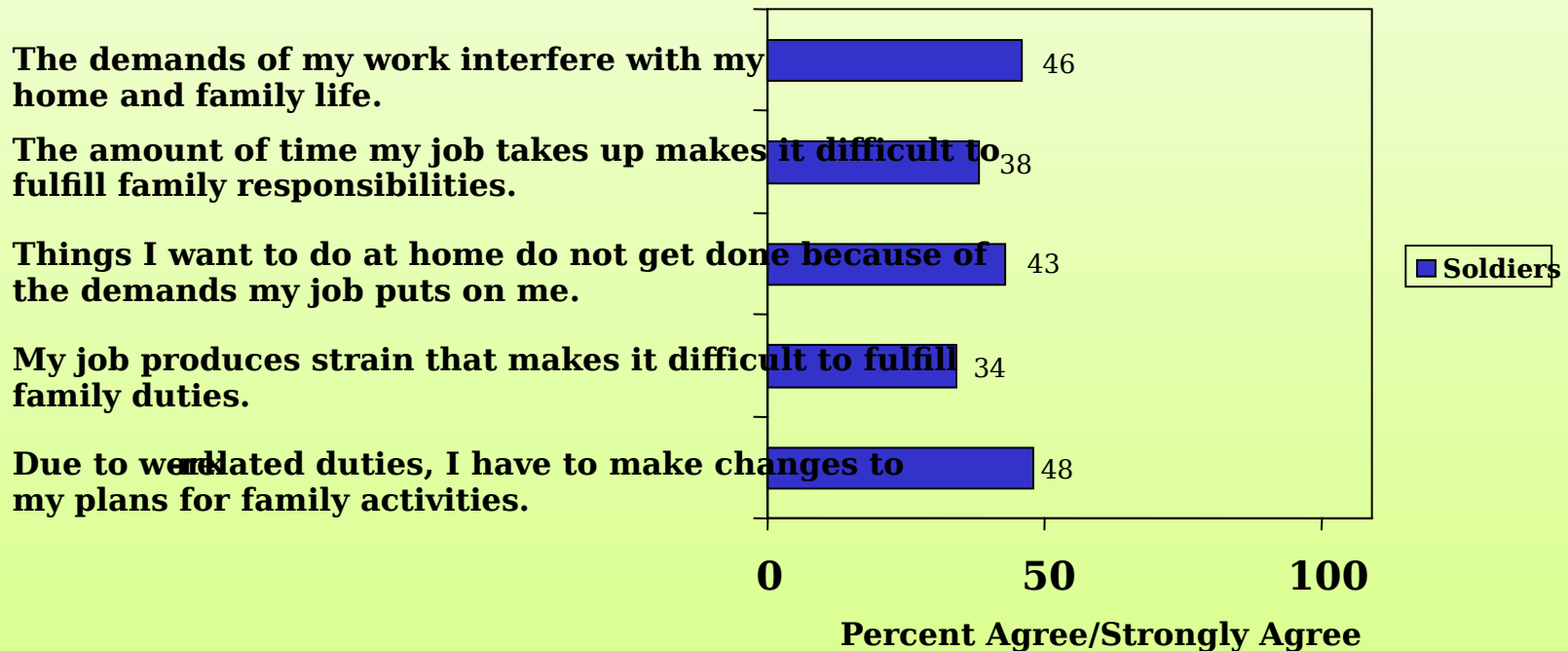
My spouses' job produces strain that makes it difficult for him/her to fulfill family duties





Work/Family Conflict

Only one-third to one-half of soldiers indicated that work interfered with family life.





Work/Family Conflict

More than half of the **married** soldiers (N=348) reported that the demands at work affect their family life. Sixty-six percent found themselves changing their family activities due to their work demands.

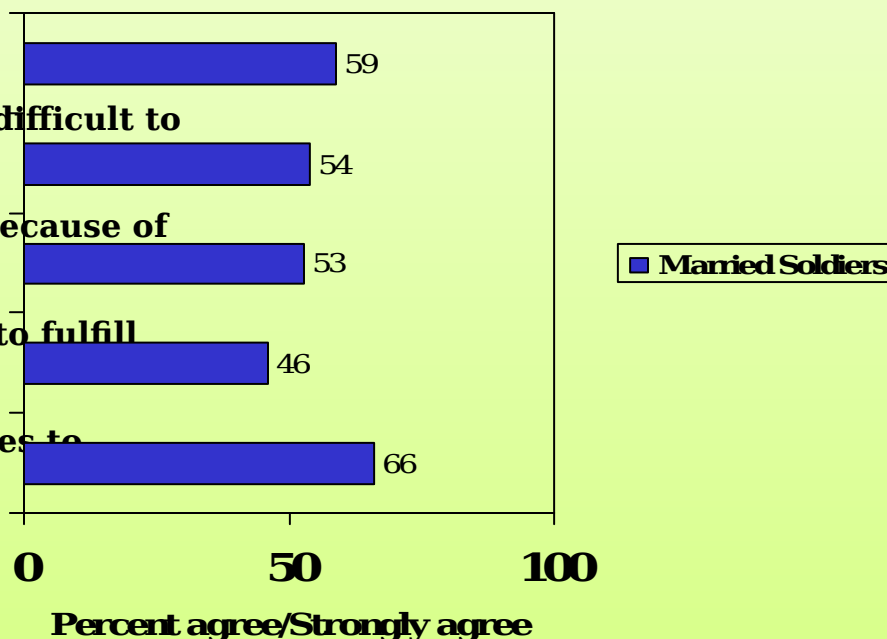
The demands of my work interfere with my home and family life.

The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfill family responsibilities.

Things I want to do at home do not get done because of the demands my job puts on me.

My job produces strain that makes it difficult to fulfill family duties.

Due to work-related duties, I have to make changes to my plans for family activities.





Question 2:

- Is WFC/FWC negatively related to:
 - Physical health
 - Job satisfaction
 - Attitudes toward the Army
 - Retention



FWC, Health and Retention

Family Data		Soldier Data	
Physical Health	.01	Physical Health	.12**
Mental Health (BSI)	.11	Mental Health (GHQ)	.07**
Retention Preference	-.01	Retention Preference	-.11**
Marital Satisfaction	-.09	Job Satisfaction	-.06
Attitude toward Army	.02		



WFC, Health and Retention

Family Data		Soldier Data	
Physical Health	.25**	Physical Health	.18**
Mental Health (BSI)	.35**	Mental Health (GHQ)	.13**
Retention Preference	-.27**	Retention Preference	-.03
Marital Satisfaction	-.15**	Job Satisfaction	-.19**
Attitude toward Army	-.49**		



FWC at the Individual Level

“ I have to be at PT at 0630. The childcare center doesn't open until 0630. Even though I have scored 300 on my PT tests each time, I am constantly reprimanded for being late for PT.”

SOG- Single Parent



WFC at the Individual Level

“ I am so tired after working 15 hour days here at the Pentagon, I tell my wife that I have to work on my days off so I can stay here and sleep. She really gets upset when I don't go home because she has a list of things I am supposed to do around the house.”

ARNG soldier at the Pentagon



Question 3:

- What is the relationship between OPTEMPO and WFC?



OPTEMPO

- Sample: Army III Corps: AD, ARNG, USAR
 - Garrison soldier sample: N=1384
 - Spouse Sample: N=709
- Survey Instrument:
 - Working conditions surrounding OPTEMPO:
 - 1. During the past 12 months, how many months have you been away overnight from home due to training, field exercises, or deployments?
 - 2. How predictable are your duty hours?
 - 3. How stressful are these military separations for you?
 - 4. I spend too much time away from my family and home because of the Army.



OPTEMPO

- Work related outcomes: (to assess participants' attitudes toward the Army)
 - 1. There is not much to be gained for our family by sticking with the Army indefinitely.
 - 2. I talk up the Army as a great organization to be associated with.
 - 3. How would you rate the overall quality of life in the Army?



OPTEMPO

- Family Related Outcomes: (family functioning)
 - 1. To what extent have you or your family experienced any of the following problems in the last 6 months?
 - Job-related problems
 - Emotional or nervous problems
 - Drug or alcohol problems
 - Marital problems
 - Childcare problems
 - Financial problems
 - Family violence
 - Parenting difficulties



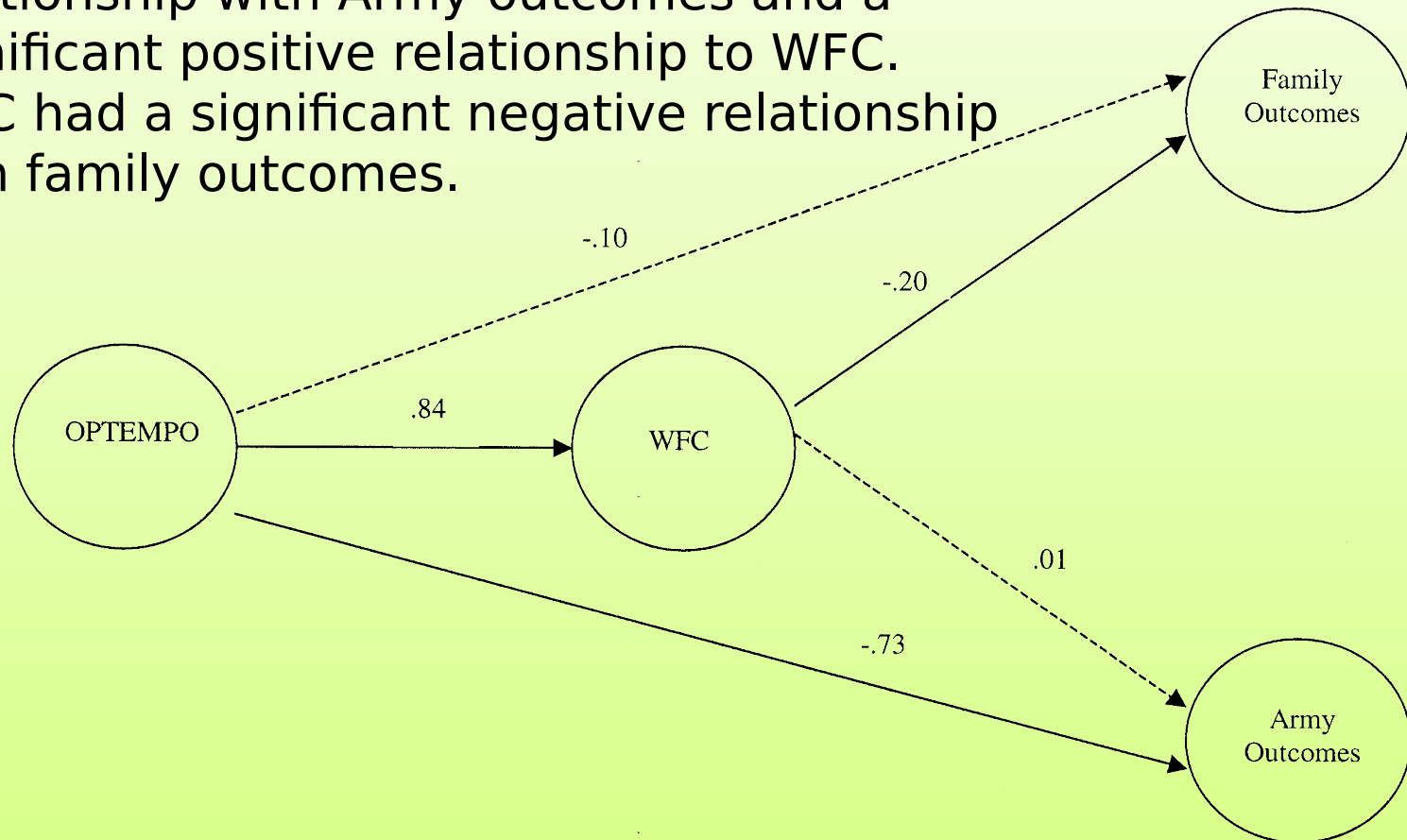
OPTEMPO

- Family Related Outcomes (cont.)
 - 2. How frequently is there conflict in your marriage/relationship?
 - 3. How satisfied are you with your marriage/relationship at the present time?



Soldier Results

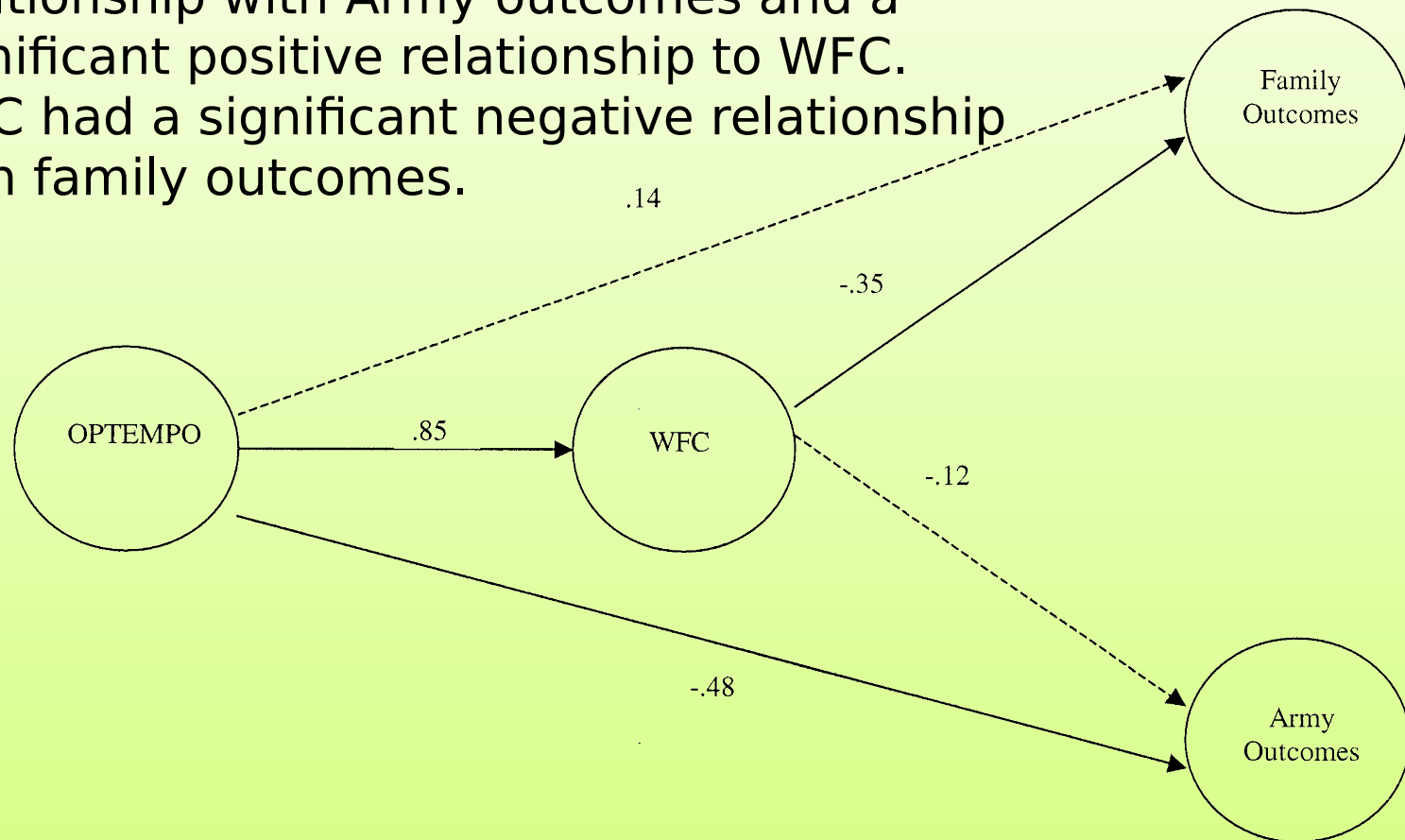
OPTEMPO has a significant negative relationship with Army outcomes and a significant positive relationship to WFC. WFC had a significant negative relationship with family outcomes.





Spouse Results

OPTEMPO has a significant negative relationship with Army outcomes and a significant positive relationship to WFC. WFC had a significant negative relationship with family outcomes.





Question 4

- What variables exacerbate or diminish the relationship between WFC and our outcomes?
 - Gender?
 - Work information and work predictability?
 - Unit climate?



Gender

- Sample:
 - 280 junior enlisted in Europe; 3 data collections
- Survey Instrument:
 - Time Demands:
 - 1. Hours Worked
 - 2. Perceptions of Workload (e.g., “I have so much to do I cannot do everything well”).
 - Turnover: “Which best describes your current active-duty Army career intentions?”
 - Definitely stay in until retirement to Definitely leave upon completion of current obligation
 - Work-Family Conflict: Netemeyer et al. (1996)

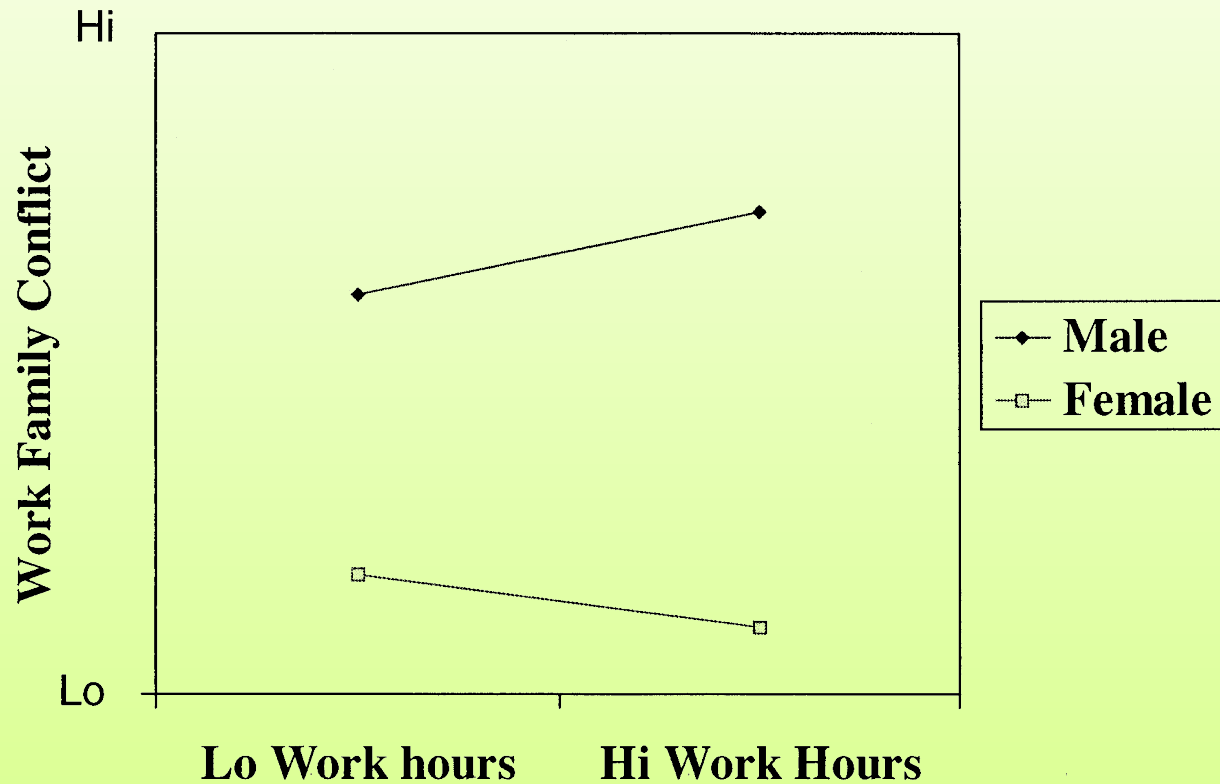


Gender

- Findings:
 - Men had significantly higher levels of WFC (M=16.4, SD=04.76) than women (M=13.95, SD=03.70) $t=2.87$, $p=.004$.
 - There is a positive correlation for men between work hours and WFC, but no significant relationship for women.
 - There is a positive correlation for men between workload and WFC, but no significant relationship for women.
 - WFC was not significantly related to turnover intentions for either gender.



Gender





Work Information & Predictability

- Sample:
 - 373 junior enlisted soldiers stationed in Germany
- Survey Instrument:
 - Work Hours
 - Work Overload
 - Work Family Conflict
 - Work Information
 - “I receive up-to-date information concerning the unit’s mission.”
 - Work predictability:
 - “I have a predictable daily work schedule”

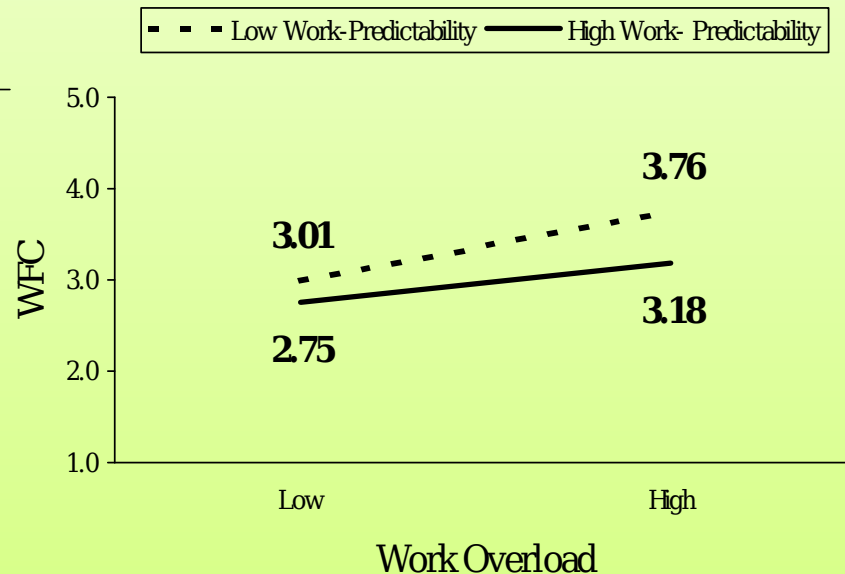
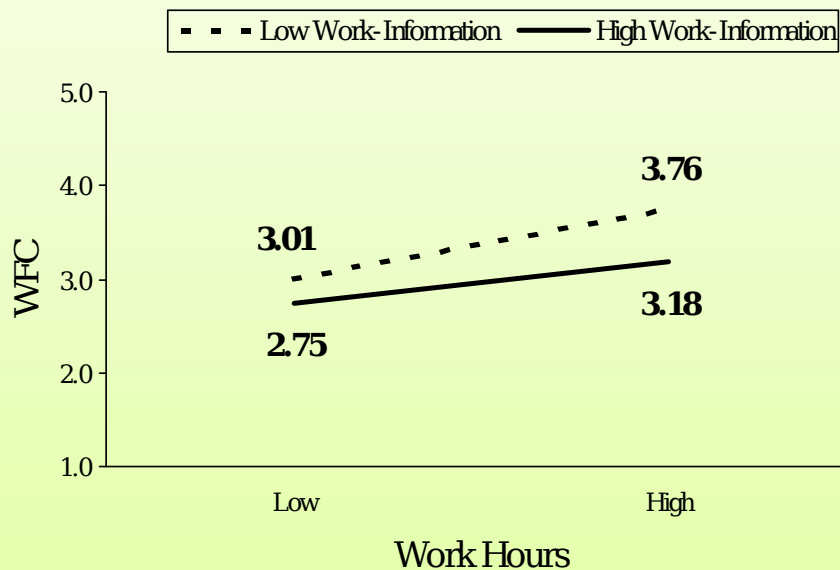


Work Information & Predictability

- Findings:
 - Work hours and work overload predicted WFC.
 - Information buffered the relationship between work hours and WFC.
 - Predictability buffered the relationship between workload and WFC.



Work Information & Predictability





Unit Climate

- Sample: Pre-Deployment Task Force, 82nd Airborne Corps (N= 2530)
- Family Climate Scale:
 - In my unit:
 - attending to family needs such as taking time off for sick children is frowned upon.
 - leaders are supportive of soldiers' efforts to balance their work and nonwork lives.
 - the way to advance is to keep family matters out of the workplace.
 - Our unit enforces soldiers taking family/soldier time.
 - My unit makes allowances for soldiers to drop off and pick up children.
 - My unit gives soldiers sufficient time to prepare themselves and their families for deployment.



Unit Climate

	Strongly disagree/disagree %	Strongly agree/agree %
In my unit, attending to family need is frowned upon.	31	34
In my unit leaders are supportive of soldiers' efforts to balance their work and nonwork lives.	39	30
In my unit the way to advance is to keep family matters out of the workplace.	20	44
Our unit enforces soldiers taking family/soldier time.	47	19
My unit makes allowances for soldiers to drop off and pick up children.	30	20
My unit gives soldiers sufficient time to prepare themselves and their families for deployment.	42	26



Unit Climate

	Physical Health	Mental Health (GHQ)	Retention Intentions
Unit Climate	-.20**	-.28**	.14**



Summary

- Is FWC a problem?
 - Only a small percentage of soldiers and spouses reported FWC as a problem.
- Is WFC a problem?
 - Spouses and married soldiers indicated WFC was a problem.
 - Spouses indicated higher levels of WFC than soldiers.
 - Junior spouses more than senior spouses
 - No difference between “deployed” and “garrison” spouses



Summary

- Is FWC related to health and retention?
 - FWC for spouses was not related to health and retention.
 - For soldiers- the higher the WFC the poorer their well-being and the more they wanted to leave the Army.
- IS WFC related to health and retention?
 - For both spouses and soldiers
 - The higher the WFC the lower the well-being.
 - The higher the WFC the more they wanted to leave the Army.



Summary

- What is the relationship between OPTEMPO and WFC?
 - OPTEMPO working conditions were associated with increased WFC for soldiers and spouses.
 - OPTEMPO working conditions had a detrimental effect on organizational outcomes for soldiers and spouses.



Summary

- What can exacerbate or diminish the relationship between WFC and our outcome variable?
 - Gender?
 - Men had significantly higher levels of WFC than women.
 - Work hours and work overload were positively associated with WFC for men, but not for women.
 - Work- information and Work-predictability?
 - Information buffered the effects of long work hours.
 - Predictability buffered the effects of high work overload.
 - Unit Climate?
 - The more family friendly a unit, the more likely soldiers are to be healthy and want to remain in the Army.



Future Research

- WORK/WORK CONFLICT
 - Example
 - ARNG SSG, a county police officer, was activated for one year; 9/11/01- 9/30/02.
 - Soldier took 90 days leave after being deactivated.
 - Commenced work on 12/28/02.
 - Issued new car, new uniforms, requalified on weapons.
 - Activated on 02/10/03 for duty in Iraq for one year, +/-.
 - What is the effect of reactivation going to be on soldier, family, and employer?



Recommendations

- At the unit level
 - Make leaders aware of the consequences of FWC and WFC for their individual soldiers and spouses.
 - Encourage leaders to provide their units with information and predictable work schedules.
- At the Army level
 - Soldiers and spouses should be informed on WFC/FWC and its moderators through Army programs and services in order to benefit well-being and retention.
 - Research must continue on WFC, FWC, and WWC throughout the Total Army to enhance satisfaction with the military way of life.



Point of Contact

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